

**GUIDELINE B-4**  
**(formerly 15-05)**

**Snow Disposal and De-icing Operations in Ontario**

**Legislative Authority:**

*Ontario Water Resources Act, RSO 1990, Section 30*  
*Environmental Protection Act, RSO 1990, Section 6*  
*Environmental Assessment Act, RSO 1990, Section 5*

**Responsible Director:**

Director, Program Development Branch

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## **SYNOPSIS**

The purpose of this guideline is to minimize the environmental impact of snow collection and disposal practices and de-icing operations. Guidance is provided to staff of the Ministry and road maintenance agencies.

Detailed information on the guidelines is contained in Procedure B-4-1: "Procedures for Snow Disposal and De-icing Operations in Ontario (1975)".

### **1.0 Snow Disposal Guidelines**

#### **1.1 Snow Removal**

Snow removal operations shall be carried out as follows:

- (a) snow from heavily travelled roadways shall be removed as quickly as possible following a storm; and
- (b) efforts shall be made to minimize the chances of picking up refuse as part of the snow removal operations.

#### **1.2 Snow Disposal**

Direct disposal of snow to watercourses or ice-covered lakes and rivers shall be eliminated wherever possible. Disposal on properly selected land sites, based on the criteria outlined in 1.4, is considered, in most cases, the best solution.

#### **1.3 Ministry Approval for Direct Disposal**

If special circumstances preclude the disposal of snow on land sites or by other satisfactory means, Ministry approval from the Region is required prior to dumping directly to a watercourse.

#### **1.4 Evaluation of Snow Disposal Sites**

A number of criteria are used to evaluate the relative suitability of disposal sites. They are:

- (a) accessibility;
- (b) noise;
- (c) alternative and future uses of the site;
- (d) visual considerations;
- (e) surface and sub-surface drainage;
- (f) previous uses of the site;
- (g) stability of the soils; and
- (h) public safety;
- (i) impact on neighbouring drinking water wells.

## **2.0 De-icing Operational Guidelines**

The Ministry encourages the sensible and conservative use of sodium chloride and other de-icing compounds and recommends the following operational guidelines to be used by road maintenance agencies:

- (a) reduce de-icing chemical application rates to the minimum amount necessary to successfully perform the job;
- (b) employ rate-controlled distribution equipment which applies the de-icing chemical at the proper rate, regardless of the vehicle's speed;
- (c) apply de-icing chemicals on main thoroughfares and critical sections of roadways only;
- (d) where salt/sand mixtures are applied, incorporate into the admixture only enough salt to achieve the desired results; and
- (e) consider special protective measures when de-icing chemicals are applied to places in proximity to very salt-sensitive areas (e.g., orchards, parks).

## **3.0 De-icing Chemical Storage**

De-icing chemicals or sand/salt stockpiles shall always be protected from precipitation or surface runoff. The Ministry recommends that permanent storage structures be installed wherever possible.

#### **4.0     The *Environmental Assessment Act***

Where an activity covered by this guideline is an undertaking under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, it shall not proceed except in compliance with that *Act*.